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Heart Throbs and Hoof Beats

Poems of Track, Stable and Fireside

By WALTER PALMER



COVER BY RODNEY THOMPSON

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CONTENTS

	Page
Toast—The Horse	9
Hearthstone Meditations	10
Unfailing Signs	14
The Hobles Sadie Wore.....	16
A Friend	27
Uhlan	28
Those Old High Wheels.....	30
E. F. Geers.....	33
That Democrat Wagon of Dad's.....	35
Away	39
The Secretary Man	40
Reflections of a Rover.....	44
The Chestnut Horse and Joe.....	46
The Old-Time Fair	51
Charles E. Dean	52
Casey Jones	54
Back Home	57
Reveries	59
When She Was Here.....	63
The Road to Everywhere.....	65
The Picture on the Wall.....	66
How the Doctor Lost and Won.....	72
The Country Store	78
Budd Doole	82
McMahon's Boy	84
Twilight	88
The Old Homestead	89
The Old White Fire Team.....	92
A Real Optimist	96
The Blacksmith Shop	99
The Sport Worth While.....	102
Finis	106

IN APPRECIATION

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FOREWORD

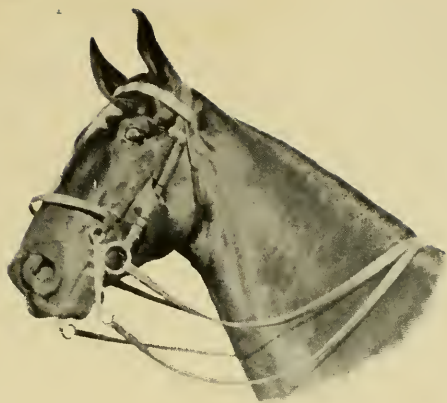
Did you ever, dear reader, really love a horse? Have you been one of those fortunate mortals who have lived a portion of their lives out in the gorgeous freedom of God's open country? Have you ever as a child confided your joys and sorrows to a pony or poured out to some equine friend, tried and true, the anguish of your soul? Have you ever looked into those great, limpid, hazel eyes when all the world seemed against you and read therein the promise to share your successes and reverses through the sunshine and shadow of life? If so, then there has come to you that supreme satisfaction that comes from an intimate association with man's best friend, a satisfaction which can not emanate elsewhere and which all the mechanical things in Christendom can not produce.

I have come to look with compassion upon those unfortunate individuals into whose lives there has never come the lasting influence of AN OLD ROAN MARE; possibly she was as white as the drifting snows that hid the hedge rows in winter; mayhap she was as black as the cawing crows that voiced a vigorous protest at your untimely intrusion; perchance she was the color of your own chubby hands in butter-nut time. Be that as it may, a memory of her faithfulness and constancy has abided with you on down through the years and prompted you to purer motives and higher ideals. Undaunted by heat or cold, she served you on festive occasions, and brought succor and relief in the hour of your affliction. Through the inky blackness of the night and against the fury of the tempest, the old mare brought you home, where warmth and comfort and loved ones awaited your coming, and where her deeds and the deeds of her progeny were an oft-told tale. The ingenuity of man may devise other methods of tilling the soil; uncertain devices will emancipate our animals from the drudgery of menial labor, but time can not efface the record or dim the achievements of those sturdy, faithful steeds whose service so largely aided and abetted the pioneers in the development of this great country, and so to their memory and to the friends of horses everywhere, this book is respectfully dedicated.

—W. B. P.

Man's love of his horse is not a thing of yesterday. It is age-old and has grown greater the further removed he has become from the dawn of time. As he emerged from the silent day of savagery perfumed with the hidden flowers of unknowing innocence, and began his long course through the silver silence of the night, to his ultimate estate of Man, always has he been accompanied by his never-failing, never-faltering Horse. Side by side they have come down the illimitable Corridors of Time and in the company of his horse, Man has ever escaped the sheer weight of unbearable loneliness. So the ties of comradeship and the sense of security have become interwoven into the deepest recesses of the very heart of mankind and the Love of his Horse is as world-wide as are those thoughts whose very sweetness yield proof that they were born for Immortality. "The Idea of Immortality, that like a sea has ebbed and flowed in the human heart, with its countless waves of hope and fear beating against the shores and rocks of time and fate, was not born of any book, nor of any creed, nor of any religion. It was born of Human Affection, and it will continue to ebb and flow beneath the mists and clouds of doubt and darkness as long as Love kisses the lips of Death." Human Affection! The cry of the hungry heart! The unutterable yearning for that sympathy of the one kindred soul which will really Know and Understand and Console!—THUS THE HORSE ABIDES.

—H. J. KRUM in the Show Horse Chronicle.



THE HORSE

The Horse is the thing ;
You may have the thrills
That come with the gasoline,
You may have the spills
And the pace that kills
In your auto or flying machine,
For the flyer that flies
In the vaulted skies
Must come to earth if his engine dies,
But the fire that lies
In a horse's eyes
Is the spark that lives and intensifies,
So here's to the horse

—THE KING—



JUST A BOY, A DOG, A TROTTER

HEARTHSTONE MEDITATIONS

When the colts are snug and cozy
From the chilling Winter blast,
And you're all alone and dozy
Just a-dreaming of the past,
Then the rudy glowing embers
Fitful shadows paint for me
Scenes when life was light and happy
And my heart was fancy free;
Just a boy, a dog, a trotter—
Ah, I'd give my very all
Just to live those old days over
When I slept out in a stall.

You can have your golf and polo,
And your yatching, if you please,





JUST A COLORED GROOM A STRUMMING

I can tell you of a pastime
Worth a dozen such as these,
Get a trotter or a show horse
For there's naught on Earth compares
To the fun a fellow really has
Who does the glad Fall fairs,
Throw away the pepsin tablets,
Smash the bottles one and all,
Just forget your pains and troubles,
Get back to Nature in a stall.

There's no orchestra a-playing,
There's no giddy cabaret,
Just a colored groom a-strumming
On a banjo far away,
"Old Black Joe" and "Suwanee River"

Sweet as from a linnet's throat
While your trotter stops his munching
So you needn't miss a note;
You may have your prima donnas,
For to me the best of all
Are the melodies of nature
That you hear out in a stall.

You can talk about your Biltmores
And your Blackstones and Savoy's,
With their taxicabs and telephones
And bell-hops and their noise,
You can have your elevators
And your marble lobbies fine,
But I'll take a pair of blankets
And a big box stall for mine;
You won't need a call for breakfast,
There's no scheme you can propose
That will wake you half so surely
As a hungry, velvet nose.

No electric lights to puzzle
And no gas to kill you dead,
Just a good, old-fashioned lantern
From the rafters overhead,
But its sombre scintillations
Seem to beckon you to stray
To the waiting arms of Morpheus
When your trotter's "put away,"
There's no ostermoor or feathers
That a landlord ever saw
That will give you half the comfort
Of a bunk out in the straw.

There's no costly lavatory,
There's no valet to be fed,
Just a bucket of cold water
And a rub-rag's all you need,
You'll find a broken mirror
On the boot-board over there
And a bit of comb provided
You've not parted with your hair,
There'll be no manicurist
And no barber within call,
Neither will you need a doctor
If you sleep out in a stall.

Oh ye weary men of millions
With your multitude of cares,
Don't you know the Silent Reaper
Creeps upon you unawares?
Get yourself a good game trotter,
One of those that always tries,
There's no nobler, truer comrade
Underneath the vaulted skies.
If you'd live long and be happy
From early Spring till Fall
Cut out care and cast your fortune
With a trotter in a stall.





"THEY CHOOSE THIS SPOT TO SETTLE DOWN"

UNFAILING SIGNS

The melancholy days are here
I know it by the chill
That permeates the atmosphere
Up here upon the hill.

The wind is sighing through the trees
The leaves are turning brown,
But there's a surer sign than these,
The city folks have moved to town.

Alas, it seems but yesterday
Since they arrived upon the scene,
So fast the seasons fly away,
So fast the Summers come between.

Far from the city's madding strife
They chose this spot to settle down,
And I can't see to save my life
Just why our neighbors move to town.

For who would give the worth-while joys
That we accrue here every day,
For all the city's smoke and noise
And all its gladsome, great, white way.

Down here we walk about serene
In perfect safety any time,
Up there they hit you on the bean
And rob you of your only dime.

Down here a neighbor is a chap
Who every morning says Hello,
Up there you may not know mayhap
The man who rents the flat below.

The robin and the lark have flown,
The red squirrel's antics ape a clown,
And Winter's coming, be it known,
When city folks go back to town.

THE HOBBLER SADIIE WORE

(Perhaps none of our great pacing mares were more popular than was Citation 2:01½. The ease and grace with which she wore her hobbles, the contented manner in which she trailed an opponent, and the cyclonic speed with which she came at the finish are all impressed indelibly upon the memory of the writer and assisted largely in making "Sadie," as she was familiarly known, a public idol.)

"Say, Kelly, you got any hobbles?
Why, what are you laughing at,
Do you think I can't drive a pacer
Because I am big and fat,
Do you think 'cause I use an auto
That I've laid down the reins
And lost all the bright red corpuscles
That raced in my boyhood veins?
Do you think 'cause I've stopped my drinking
And grown a bit more staid
That I've forgotten the noblest horse
The good Lord ever made?
Yes, Kelly, I've got a pacer
But she breaks when I try to race
And I want a set of hobbles
To keep her on a pace,
She does not always need them
And then again I'll swear
To get her a set of hobbles
Like Old Sadie used to wear.

You must remember Sadie
Who turned full many a trick,
Her real name was Citation
And we called her driver Dick.
You saw the race, I'm certain,
And must recall the mare,
I can see her just as plainly
As she was standing there:
Brown and modest, not as handsome
As this younger mare of mine,
But with a wealth of something
That made her almost divine;
Say, my mare would look just like her
When she turned around to score,
If you'd sell me a set of hobbles
Just like Old Sadie wore.

"Did I buy her? No, I bred her;
Remember the old roan mare
That I drove when I was a-courting
And raced at the county fair?
Do you mind the year I rented
The farm on Coval creek,
The crops were most a failure
And the family had all been sick;
I was mighty short of horses
But the old mare pulled me through
'Cause when the big ones faltered
She just did the work of two,
And when they puffed and wilted
She seemed to thrive instead,
A cross of Hal and Bashaw
On a dash of thorobred.
"My landlord, Old Man Skinner,



"A DAPPER MAN IN GRAY"

Wouldn't trust me for my plows
Till I gave him a chattel mortgage
On my horses and my cows,
And Kelly, nothing hurt me so in twenty years
As the name of that old roan mare
When I saw it through the tears.
The note fell due in August
And we'd worked and saved and planned
Till on July twenty-second
We had all the cash on hand.
How I recall the morning
For my wife had helped me start
And had placed the eggs and butter
In the bottom of the cart,
The whole world seemed so happy
And my heart so light and free

As I thought how
Would surely envy
The thrush and lark and linnet
Seemed to revel in their song
And I hummed forgotten ballads
As the old mare jogged along.

“Well, when I got to the city
I had a drink or two,
And I soon forgot old Skinner
And the errands I had to do.
I wandered about from bar to bar
Till a band began to play
And then I remembered the races
Were going on that day.
I hadn't seen a race in years
But it sort o' brought me back
And I dropped in behind the music
And followed it to the track.
The free-for-all was scoring
And a dapper man in gray
Was writing on a blackboard
And then rubbing it away;
Talk about your school ma'ams
That are handy with the chalk,
He was surely some professor,
He could write and rub and talk.
A sporty looking fellow
Who owned some racing stock
Informed me he could write a book
And that his name was Jock,
He seemed to figure a little
And then he'd turn and say,

We'll come on, boys, and pick 'em out
Before they get away.

"I had always kept my wallet
Tied up with a buckskin string
In my right hand trousers pocket
And had held on to the thing
With a vice-like grasp to shield it
From the semblance of all harm,
When my sporty friend politely
Touched me on the other arm;
You see, he said, my brother owns
The brown mare with the straps
And another brother drives her,
And I thought that you perhaps
Would like to make a little money,
For it's fixed for her to win,
Those hobbled birds will help her,
She'll simply ramble in;
Better get down fifty plunkers
'Fore my brother bets his wads,
You'll never get another chance,
He'll surely change the odds.
Something seemed to tell me, Kelly,
That the kid was on the square,
So I peeled off fifty dollars
And bet it on the mare,
And as I passed it up to Jock,
'Straight or place,' was all he said,
And I answered, I want to bet it
That Sadie comes ahead.
My name's Joe, but he thought he knew me,
For he said with half a sneer,

Si, I thought you wasn't
But I'm mighty glad you're here,
Then he handed me out a little check,
I remember it just as well,
'Cause 'twas like you get for your coat and hat
When you stop at a big hotel.
Mendota Club, it said at the top
And beneath with a pencil blue,
His hired man had written
Citation—Ten to Two.

"They're off, and the murmuring crowd is
stilled
As a chestnut flew to the rail,
And the hopes of Sadie's friends were chilled
As she was seen to trail;
Past the quarter and round the turn
The flying pacers come,
Their hoofbeats echoing on the air
Like the roll of a muffled drum;
Nearer and nearer, step by step,
Was there ever such a scene,
The black coat leading by a length
The driver dressed in green;
Grim and determined are the men
As Sphinx-like they sit and ride,
Awaiting the finish they know full well
Will be won or lost by a stride;
Through the spell-bound crowd
Past the half in three
Like spectres grim they stole,
And round the turn, and up the stretch
And past the three-quarter pole,

And on the turn where the stables lie,
Where the grocers sit on the rail,
And still the chestnut raced in front
With the brown mare on her trail,
I turned away in deep despair
As I thought of old Skinner's note,
And somehow a mist seemed to fill the air
And a lump seemed to come in my throat.
But hark—a roar like the surging sea
Arose from the crowded stand.
'Twas the sweetest music I ever heard
And I've listened to Sousa's band;
Through the frantic crowd I caught a glimpse
With an eager anxious eye,
Of a flash of green and a dash of gold
As Dick pulled out to try.

"Say, Kelly, you've seen a rabbit dart
With its ears flat on its back,
When life hung in the balance
With the hounds upon its track;
You've seen a turkey buzzard
Seem to stand still in the sky,
And then swoop down on your chickens
With no trusty shot gun nigh,
You've seen a graceful sail boat
Helpless like with empty sail,
And you've seen it scudding homeward
When it felt the welcome gale,
Well, I don't know how it happened,
But I always will declare,
He picked her up and placed her
Beside the other mare.

Past the flag man,
Past the draw gate,
On into the human lane
They were racing as two pacers
Ne'er will race that track again,
Each driver with the cunning
That an artist can command
Was working like a demon
With a voice and whip and hand,
And Richard, leaning over,
With determined voice and clear
Was shouting, Sadie, Sadie, Sadie,
In her ear.

"The crowd was fairly frantic,
Every man was on his feet yelling madly
Though no one was sure
Which mare had won the heat,
But I heard the judges whisper
That the hobbled mare was first,
And I suddenly decided to liquiate my thirst.
Jock didn't seem to be quite so glad
That I came to town that day,
But he said as he counted out the roll,
'Welcome as the flowers in May;'
He's a mighty jolly fellow
And I know he meant it, too,
When he said, 'Si, come tomorrow,
I'll save something good for you.

"Well, old Skinner got his money
And perhaps it saved his life,
But I took about three hundred home
And gave it ot my wife.

I did not intend to tell her
But next day she says, she,
'Joe, there's one very knotty problem
That you must explain to me.
You have always been respected,
Have your senses taken flight,
Who is this Sadie, Sadie,
That you talk about all night?'

She had me in a pocket
And so I sat right down
And told her all that happened
The day I went to town.
And we sort o' courted over
And decided then and there
To raise another Sadie
From the old roan mare;
And we've got her, she's a pippin,
Just as fat and smooth and round,
And I've broken her to harness
And she's absolutely sound.

"But times have changed;
I bought the land old Skinner had
And annexed another eighty
That I purchased from my Dad;
We have got a brand new auto,
Just as slick as slick can be,
But I wouldn't give that filly
For all of them I ever see.
It's got a clock upon it
All fixed up for style and show
That tells you just how far you've been
And where you want to go,



"WHERE THE BLOSSOMS DRIFT IN MAY"

There is only one more contraption
They could add to the con-sarned thing,
That would tell me how much it was going to
cost
And what it would finally bring.
I've worked a piece of highway,
Till it's smooth and flat and straight,
Just a half a mile from the big white elm
To the maple at the gate,
And, Kelly, you ought to see them step,
That filly and that machine;
It brings me a vision of by-gone days
And two coats of black and green.

"The old roan mare has left us
And we tearfully laid her away
Out in the apple orchard
Where the blossoms drift in May.

And o' the summer evening
We stroll there, me and my
And thank the G. good gifts
For the better things of life.
Some people think religion
Is all a sort o' fudge,
But somehow it brings us nearer
To the Great Presiding Judge.

"Yes, Kelly, I'm starting the filly
Next week at the County Fair,
My friends will be in the grandstand
And I want you to be there;
I hardly think she'll make a break
But I want to be sure and win
With just a little more room for mine,
No more of that rambling in;
So I came for a pair of Hobbles
And, Kelly, I implore,
Be sure and pick me out a set
Just like Old Sadie wore."



A FRIEND

A friend is a fellow who knows your faults,
Who sees all your ins and outs ;
A chap whose loyalty never halts,
And who never a moment doubts ;
A pal who's with you where'er you go
From the start to the very end,
Who lends a hand when you stub your toe—
That's what I call a friend.



"UHLAN" 1:58

TO UHLAN

Oh King dethroned, within whose placed eyes
There lurks "The look of Eagles" as of old,
I wonder if you do not oft surmise
The place in human hearts you safely hold.

I wonder if you do not look askance
On many things that men and nations do,
You who have never missed a chance
To serve your master just the best you knew.

I wonder if your honest heart rebels
At man's gross inhumanity to man;
I wonder if your indignation swells,
Pray, answer me, ex-monarch, if you can.

Were you not piqued when crown and scepter divide
The tidings of your rival's feats were known?
Did you not long to measure stride for stride
Ere you resigned the glories of your throne?

A throne indeed, the sea you love
Will murmur melodies awhile you sleep
And purple mountains far above
Like sentries tall their vigils keep.

Your lines are cast in pleasant ways
And still your eyes confirm the truth,
You're longing for those yesterdays
And for an hour of speed and youth.

You long for Proctor's guiding hand,
You hark for Tanner's pleading voice,
You loved the plaudits of the stand,
Its tumult made your heart rejoice.

But you have nobly done your best,
Those flying feet have never swerved,
Let no regrets disturb your rest,
For Youth must always first be served.

Alas our reign is all too brief,
A few short days of strength and might,
For Time steals on us like a thief,
And then—it's night.



THOSE OLD HIGH WHEELS

Just a quaint, old-fashioned sulky,
 Standing in a dusty mow,
But its form grotesque and bulky
 Charms my fancy even now,
And I halt my explorations
 As this antique rig I scan
To approve the rude creation
 Of some old-time artisan.

Timid pigeons coo and flutter
 As my warning steps intrude
And the red-head on the gutter
 Drums a noisy interlude;
Full the ample mow and fragrant
 With the scent of new mown hay,
So I find myself a vagrant
 Dreaming of a by-gone day.

Musing there beneath
Where the sunlight filters through,
How the quaint memory mingles
With the scenes that sulky knew.
With the horses that once drew it,
With the men it served so well,
And the list as now I view it
Seems to hold me in its spell.

There is Goldsmith Maid and Rarus,
And Maud S. and Billie Bair,
And Splan and Orrin Hickok,
Was there ever such a pair?
There's St. Julian and Trinket,
Palo Alto and Sunol,
And a score of others answer
As my fancy calls the roll.

Then comes Woodruff, Mace and Murphy,
Household names in by-gone days,
Honest Charlie Ford and Hopeful,
What a loyal pair of grays,
Dexter with his four white stockings,
Smuggler with his pounds of weight,
And with Charlie Marvin driving
Next comes jogging through the gate.

Lucy, George M. Patchen, Tackey,
Red Cloud drawing Johnnie Wade,
Now report to draw positions,
What a record each one made.
Arab, Maxie Cobb and Phallas,
Clingstone, too, and Jay Eye See
Are among the many others
That come scoring down to me.

Rowdy Boy and Mattie Hunter,
Sleepy Tom and Buffalo Girl,
Johnston, Direct and Hal Pointer,
Names that keep my brain awhirl,
Tommy Lynn and Patsey Clinker,
Silver Tail and Daisy D.
Speers, Longfellow Whip and Williams,
Billie Ham and Lottie P.

Badger Girl, Cozette, Observer,
I was but a youngster then,
But I have a fond remembrance
Of old Big Soap and Lew Glenn,
Benson, Chandler, Grimes and Curry,
All have heard the final call,
And McHenry, cool and crafty,
Doubtless wizard of them all.

Gone, alas, those steeds and drivers,
But I know they'll reconvene
Up there by the placid waters,
In the pastures evergreen,
And I'm thankful for the vision
That is brought to me so oft
By that quaint old high wheel sulky
Standing in the stable loft.





E. F. GEERS

Like some gnarled oak that through the tempests lasts
And grows more sturdy with those trying blasts
So you have grown, undaunted, unapproachable, alone.

Temptation knocks unheeded at your door
And hurries on to fields that promise more;
Misfortune halts you, but no factor stays
The even tenor of your winning ways.

Rich in the things that make a man,
May you live on like that old oak apace
Far into and beyond the span
That marks our cradle and our resting place.
Oh, cunning hand and magic name,

Oh, shades of old Red Pointer and the rest,
No pair has ever yet been known to fame
That stir the same emotions in my breast,
And so when Spring time birds come flocking back
To haunts and homes they loved in other years
We come to loiter at the trotting track
And worship at the shrine of "Massa Geers."
May time and tide that do not wait
Deal kindly with us here below,
But may they please just hesitate,
"Doggone it," Pop, we love you so.





A FRONT WHEEL IS MISSING

THAT DEMOCRAT WAGON OF DAD'S

I found it today half hidden away
In a tangle of brush and of weeds,
Not far from the spot where the children play
And the path to the old orchard leads;
And oh, what a myriad of memories abide
Of those long-ago lassies and lads
That gathered around and just begged for a ride
In that democrat wagon of Dad's.

A front wheel is missing, the dashboard is bent,
The birds have built nests 'neath the seat;
The leather upholstering is tattered and rent,
Its passing is almost complete;
And yet as I view it, it lightens my load
And I'm back once again as a lad
When bronzed and barefooted I trudged down the
road
For a ride in that wagon with Dad.

No varnish adorns it, the sun and the shine
Have vanquished the paint it once knew;
An elm hovers o'er it, a friendly old vine
Strives to hide its defects from my view;
But I can't be denied, so I brush them aside
While I think of the fun that I've had
As I climbed to his side on that seat for a ride
In that Democrat wagon with Dad.

For years it was given the choicest abode
Till an auto appeared on the scene,
And then the old wagon was lost to the road
Crowded out by a gaudy machine;
The tool house now claimed it and answered its needs
Till a tractor came puffing along,
And then it was left to repose in the weeds,
Lulled to sleep by the meadow lark's song.

How oft in the days that have taken to flight
Have I pictured those scenes o'er and o'er,
Of Father and Mother returning at night
And the goodies the old wagon bore;
There were bushels of buckwheat and oysters and
things
That made a boy's heart superglad,
And so I rejoice that my memory clings
To that democrat wagon and Dad.

On Sunday it took us to worship and prayer
In the white meeting house on the hill,
Forgotten the sermons we listened to there
But the wagon remains with us still.



THE WHITE MEETING HOUSE ON THE HILL

And then in the Autumn, the season's work o'er,
We drove to the fair every day,
And how I would tease Dad and clamor for more
If we raced just a bit on the way.

For Father contended a man wasn't bad
Just because he loved horses a lot;
I've followed his pretext and so from a lad
I have worshipped a horse that could trot;
I've a boy of my own that can drive a big car
But I've watched him and know it is true,
He don't get the pleasure, as fast as they are,
That his Dad and his Grandfather knew.

And so as I view it my boyhood returns
And a mist sort o' comes to my eyes;
I'll frankly confess that my heart fairly yearns
For those far-away days that I prize,
The neighbors, the schoolhouse, the village and all
For the country I loved as a lad,
But the happiest moments that I can recall
Were spent in that wagon with Dad.

We are told that when life with its trouble and fuss
Shall end and our journey is o'er,
A palid old boatman is waiting for us
With a barque for a far-away shore,
Our finish is plain and we can not remain,
But I'd welcome the change and be glad,
If I could be sure I would nestle secure
In that Democrat Wagon with Dad.



"A SILENCE REIGNS UPON THE HILL"

AWAY

The shades are down across the way,
Unspotted lies the snow and still,
The giant oaks their vigils keep,
A silence reigns upon the hill;
We look away across the lawn
Where merry parties once held sway,
But all the house is dark and lone,
The shades are down across the way.

We miss the children's noisy play,
They do not care the hill to climb
As once they did when they could stay
At Grandma's until supper time;
The wind seems sighing since they left,
The beagles have a mournful hey,
In fact, the whole bluff seems bereft,
The shades are down across the way.



THE OLD ELM AT ITS BACK

THE SECRETARY MAN

Dear Patron of the "Sport of Kings,"
Did it ever occur to you
That a real live secretary
Has a few odd jobs to do?
Did you ever stop to ponder
How much time is all his own
From the day his dates are published
Till his deficit is shown?
Did you ever chance to chide him
'Cause he overlooked your name
For a complimentary ticket?
Don't you think he was to blame?
Did he give your groom the choicest stall
There was upon the track

Close to the well and paddock
With the old elm at its back?
Did he have the "chamber" bedded?
Did he have a room for you
Just outside the track enclosure
That was cool and fresh and new?
Could he tell the name and breeding
Of the horse in every stall?
Did he know how fast the pacers



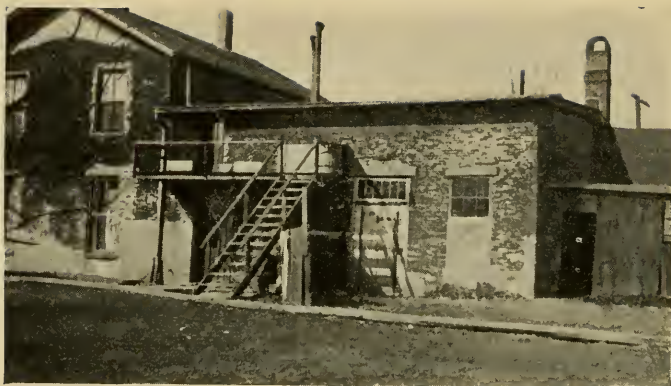
THE BOYS WHO ROLL THE BANDAGE

Would go in the free-for-all?
Did the bookies get your money?
'Twas the secretary's fault,
He should have had the judges
Very promptly call a halt
When your ticket wasn't winning,
But of course he didn't know
When you bet your last two dollars
That your pacer couldn't show.

Did he sell box four to Smithy?
Did he sell box three to Hall?
He should surely have known better
Why their wives don't speak at all.
Was he right there with the money
When your trotter's race was o'er?
Was his track hard enough for the sound ones
And soft enough for the sore?
Was your laundry ticket settled?
Did you get an extra pass?
Did you win a heat in 'leven
And stay in the twenty class?
Did he charge your entrance money?
Did he have a big boquet
Waiting for you at the station
On the day you shipped away?
Were the winners always happy
And the losers never sore?
Did he work full twenty hours
And more of the twenty-four?
If he did you've found the fellow
Who's entitled to the crown,
For he's picked up the burden
Where we all have thrown it down,
And I add my humble tribute
To that secretary's skill,
He's the man behind the cannon,
He's the flour in the mill;
So I drink in silent homage
To the men who boost the game,
To the boys who roll the bandage
And the chap who rides to fame,

To the breeder and the trainer
And to all the horseman clan,
But I drain my cup the deepest
To the secretary man.





A HAVEN OF REST WHEN THE WINTER WINDS BLOW

REFLECTIONS OF A ROVER

The old city bastille—How plain it appears
As I view it again through the mist of the years;
Though rivers and mountains and plains intervene
I see it again as on memory's screen;
How many a time in the days that have passed
It has sheltered us well from the pitiless blast,
And its old battered walls seemed a kingly abode
When its doors swung ajar for the knights of the
road.
I see them again, though unbidden I rove,
The fellows who camped 'round the old cannon
stove.
There was Paddy the fifer, whose merry old flute
Harbored music no artist would dare to refute;
The bats on the rafters and rats on the floor
Were charmed by the strains of his Rory O'Moore,

And when Paddy's overture echoed away
A Thespian bold rendered part of a play;
'Twas said by his friends that he promised in youth
To rival a Mansfield, or Barrett or Booth;
There was Tommy the toper, and Rattle Trap Jack,
The latter a title he gained on the track;
There were men of all nations and men of all creeds
Who listened while others recounted their deeds;
Just a care-free collection of innocent chaps
With the wanderlust habit prevailing perhaps,
And a thirst unrelentingly begging each morn
For the poison that lurks in the heart of the corn.
No costly contraptions the old bastille knew,
But a haven of rest when the Winter winds blew;
So I'm longing tonight to hit the back trail
And slumber again in the old city jail;
It's welcome and warmth brought a vision of home
And I cannot forget it where ever I roam.
You may laugh, if you like, sir, but what is the use
To chide me for loving the old calaboose.



JOE WAS TEN TO A DAY

THE CHESTNUT HORSE AND JOE

"Just a chestnut horse," the neighbors said,
As they saw him led away,
And they marvel'd much at the tears I shed
And the anguish I felt that day,
For that chestnut horse had a place in my heart
Where the angels I worship dwell,
And he seemed of my very life a part,
So this is the tale I tell.

Joe was ten to a day when he found the mare
With the new born foal at her side,
While with a proud and zealous air
She watched the youngster's ambling stride,

And Joe with nimble feet and bare
Dashed down the garden path in leaps
To bring me tidings of my favorite mare
And ask me if the colt was his "for keeps."

"Oh, Dad, it's a wonderful foal," he said,
"With eyes like the sky above,
And a queer white mark in its little head
Like the stars in the flag we love.
You'll let me name him now, of course,
Since you've given him all to me,
I'm going to make him a fighting horse
And call him My Liberty."

Ah, little soldier with sun-kissed hair,
Your boyhood dreams came true,
Those two gold stars in the window there
Mean the chestnut horse and you.
I helped Joe break him to drive and ride
And they won at the County Show,
While all the neighbors far and wide
Knew the chestnut horse and Joe.

The happy years that came between
Brought never a thought of fate
Till the lad at last had reached eighteen
And the horse was counted eight;
And then the call to the colors came
And my boy was first to go,
But the chestnut horse never seemed the same
After saying good-bye to Joe.

A neighbor's boy was mustered in,
He had been Joe's dearest chum;
They promised to stick through thick and thin
And to write if harm should come.
I hitched the chestnut up alone
And took the boys to the train,
Somehow the skies had darker grown,
And from the clouds the tear drops came.
While the precious moments flew away
Joe whispered half in fun,
"Send Liberty over to me some day
To help me catch a Hun.

"You know I'll love him where'er I am,
And the world is not so wide;
Just sell him some day to Uncle Sam
And we'll meet on the other side."
The train passed on with its clanging bell,
And the light of my life went too;
It seemed, alas, like some awful knell
As it disappeared from view.

The season wearily wore away
With its hopes and doubts and fears,
Joe's face before me day by day
And his words in my aching ears.
So I sold the horse of my joy and pride
To a captain I met by chance,
To do his bit on the "Other Side"
With the khaki boys in France.

Ah, little wonder the world stood still
And my tears in abundance fell
As the chestnut turned at the top of the hill
And whinnied a last farewell.
The letters that came were full of cheer
And one held a poppy bloom,
The end of the war seemed very near
And the boys would be with us soon.

The Yanks were hot on the Boche's track,
They were beating the hated Huns;
And Pershing was pushing them steadily back
In spite of their gas and guns;
And then—a letter from Joe's best friend,
"Sir, I promised to let you know,
They fought together to the end,
The chestnut horse and Joe."
"Don't grieve," it said, "for the cause is won,
And they really have not died,
Their glorious lives have just begun—
They have met on the Other Side."

Just a chestnut horse and a boy so fair,
Two forms that were stark and cold,
But the searchers paused in silent prayer
For the stars that had turned to gold.
And so each year as the Spring comes 'round,
I shall think of the poppies that blow
And nod their heads o'er the grassy mound
Of the Chestnut Horse and Joe.



A HAND SHAKE AND HOW DO YOU DO

THE OLD-TIME FAIR

Oh Autumn, bring me back the days
I dreamed the dreams of a boy,
Before I had learned the world and its ways
And life was one round of joy;
Bring me a vision of old-time friends,
A hand shake and How-do-ye-do,
One hour now could make amends
For the pain of a whole life through;
Bring me those moments free from care
And the patter of feet at the score;
Bring me one day of the old-time fair,
I will never ask for more;

Bring me a tune from the old-time band,
A glimpse of the old-time course,
Bring the applause of the crowded stand
As it cheers for the winning horse;
Bring me the chicken dinners rare,
Bring all of these, I say;
Revive, O Autumn, your old-time fair,
And bring me one yesterday.





CHARLES E. DEAN

I would not count that he alone
Has won profound success
Because a monumental stone
Proclaims his mightiness;
I would not call that fellow great
Because his lands are wide
And potentates from every state
Come flocking to his side;
Though bonds may fill his ample vaults
And wealth be everywhere
I could not overlook his faults
If he had been unfair.

But if he builds a little cot
With roses here and there,
If children come to bless his lot
With joy beyond compare,
If pets come trooping to his call,
If, by his ways serene,
He leads a pacer from her stall
And makes of her a queen ;
If he has brought to this old sphere
A wealth of pleasure, I'll confess
He's learned the art of living here
And earned his title to success.
Then would I call him truly great
For surely he has more than wealth
Whose friends from sea to sea await
The anxious tidings of his health,
For lands and bonds and wealth take wings
But honest hands and cheery smile
We find are the essential things
That go to make this life worth while.



CASEY JONES

(A true story in verse with apologies.)

Listen, my fellows, and you shall get
A tale of the ride of Splint Barnett.
'Twas the tenth of October in Nineteen 'leven
And few of us all this side of Heaven
Will witness a show like the one we saw
Take place on the banks of the raging Kaw.

The American Royal show was on
And from far and near the fans had come
To see Missouri, proud and great,
Win blues from every other state,
And all the poultry and sheep and swine,
The mule maligned and the loving kine
Had garnered the honor and glory too
That came from winning the Royal blue.
The shades of night closed o'er the scene
And found all tranquil and serene;
But hark—the bugle calls, and lo,
The gate swings wide for the night horse show.

The building from door to dome is filled
But the surging crowd at last is stilled
And all the boxes seem to be
So filled with the flower of chivalry
That old-time Romans in their might
Would have envied the Royal on this night.
A gaited class is in the ring,
All trying for that subtle thing called fame

To which we all aspire,
Who ever rise from out the mire.
And well they might be proud to win,
For every rider of renown
From Old Kentucky's rippling rills
To Old Missouri's Ozark hills
Has gathered there in K. C. town.
The cheers for each are long and loud
As they dash in splendor before the crowd,
But all are lost in a mighty roar
As a chestnut comes racking through the door,
And sitting astride his famous pet
Is the sphinx-like form of "Splint" Barnett.

They walked, and walked they all so fine
One scarcely could tell the best in line;
They trotted, and the Barnett mount
Just seemed to put them all to rout;
They racked, and how "Splint's" horse could whiz!
It looked as though the blue was his;
They cantered, and all but Barnett's steed
Responded promptly on either lead.
Line up, line up, and they did their best
To pose each horse for the final test.
"What horse is this with rack so fine,"
Asked the judge of "Splint" as they wheeled in
line,
"Why, why," he answered in accents bold,
"He's just a baby, a four-year-old.
Fact is, Mr. Judge, he's half-past three,
I knows, 'cause they raised him close to me.
Yes, Mr. Judge, he's oil in the can,
He's named for a famous railroad man;

He's not in a class with those other bones,
This horse, Mr. Judge, is Casey Jones."
But "Splint" felt shaky in the knees
When the judge said, "Let him canter, please."
"Why, why, Mr. Judge, he cantered before,
You surely don't need to see him more;
I lets him canter most every day,
You must have been looking the other way."
"Well, well," said the judge, "why all this fuss,
He's got to canter here, for us;
And if he don't, you know it's true
He hasn't a chance to win the blue."

So "Splint" leaned over the chestnut's neck
And promised him many a half a peck;
He coaxed and threatened and whipped and spurred
But Casey raked on like a flying bird,
And when the judges waved him in
Our hero murmured with some chagrin,
"Casey Jones, just half-past three,
You've had your last square meal with me;
No pesterin' houn' dog like you are
Can ever ride in my old freight car."
And John Hook whispered on his right,
"'Splint,' his memory's mighty bad tonight."
And Cohen and Moores and Woods and Bass
Still chide him gently as they pass.

And so the name of Casey Jones
Has been saved from the list of the world's unknowns,
And horsemen each year as the equines show
Will recount his deeds in the twilight's glow,
And dream of the past as the story they tell
Of a horse who did all but canter well.



BACK HOME

Back Home! Ah, wondrous words are those
That every weary wanderer knows,
For cast about where'er we may
We plan to go back home some day;
Across the miles that intervene
The prairies seem a bit more green,
The skies still seem a bit more blue
And old-time friends a bit more true
Back Home.

Back home a chill is in the air,
But surely hearts are warmer there;
The flowers that come where snowdrifts lie
Will be the sweeter bye-and-bye;
The morn may be a trifle gray
But breezes blow the clouds away,
And sunshine will come smiling through
As if to help to welcome you
Back Home.

Back home I hope the neighbors say
They miss me since I've been away;
There's many that can take my place
And fill it with a kindlier grace;
There's many that can do my tasks,
And yet I hope somebody asks
Of someone that they chance to see
Just when they are expecting me
Back Home.

Back Home—but one must go away
To grasp the thoughts those words convey,
For when you wander 'round the land
You long to grasp an old friend's hand;
You long to see that old-time smile,
Awaiting for him all the while,
To say, in that familiar voice,
“Old Pal, your friends will all rejoice
That you're Back Home.”



REVERIES

(In California)

The papers say it's snowing
Far across the Great Divide,
And I feel I should be going
Back to take one more sleigh ride;
Sun and flowers all together
I'll agree are mighty fine,
But I miss the Winter weather
That belongs to Christmas time.

There seems a bit of friction
Twixt this date and nature's laws,
And it's difficult to picture
Summer things with Santa Claus;
I opine it's more in keeping
When he comes the same old way,
With his bells and antlered reindeer
And the same old battered sleigh.

Of course they try to tell us
Santa has a limousine,
But 'twould spoil my Merry Christmas
If it smelled of gasoline;
And when his style is altered
It will multiply my joys
To see a pair of trotters
Distributing the toys.

There was something sort o' bracing
In the days I used to know,
And it kept your blood a-racing
When 'twas twenty-six below;
It was then we banked the stable
And thawed out the kitchen pump
While a thousand other duties
Kept us always on the jump.



I can picture now the kitchen
Where my Mother baked the cakes,
And stuffed the bags with sausage
Like no city butcher makes,
And when Dad came to breakfast
He would slap his hands and say,
"Well, it snowed a good ten inches,
We will use the bobs today."

We would fill the box up deeply
With a wealth of golden straw;
A modern carriage heater
Was a thing we never saw;
But a pair of downy blankets
And a "buffalo" or two
Afforded more real comfort
Than an auto ever knew.

Sometimes when the winds were blowing
And the cold was most intense,
It just kept on a-snowing
Till 'twas higher than the fence;
We'd cross the fields and shovel
Until we reached the town,
But oh, I loved the Winter
When we got the bobsleds down.

Strange they always took me shopping
Until Christmas time was near,
Then they held wierd consultations
Meant for no small boy to hear,
And I noticed one large closet
Where I always played before
Was kept securely fastened
And no key was in the door.

And then on Christmas evening,
When the church was all aglow,
And a million tiny diamonds
Seemed to sparkle in the snow,

All the mystery was ended,
For the gifts upon the tree
Were the contents of that closet
That the bobsled brought to me.

Dear old bobsled, staunch and sturdy,
Helpmeet of the pioneers,
Memory like a sacred halo
Hovers o'er you through the years;
Some day when the snow is falling
Thick on village church and store,
Hope I hear some boy's dad calling,
"Get the bobsleds down" once more.



WHEN SHE WAS HERE

When she was here, the one I loved and lost,
Joy reigned supreme, I counted not the cost ;
The happy years that sped away
Were as but weeks,
The weeks as but a day.
The house that once her presence filled
Re-echoes not the voice that's stilled ;
Her sacred room when I intrude
But greets me with its solitude ;
I worship for her own dear sake
The homey things she used to make
When she was here.

When she was here no favor I could ask
Would seem to her in any way a task ;
A word, a smile, a fond caress
Would prompt me to a new success ;
The flowers that she loved and reared
Have for the moment disappeared
But to return each Spring to grace
The verdure of her resting place ;
The birds will nest where oft before
She watched them from the open door,
While half expectant in his stall
A trotter listens for her call,
And pets still wistfully await
The step they welcomed at the gate
When she was here.

When she was here the magic of her hand
Was something I could never understand.
The touch that soothed my aching brow
I'll feel no more, and yet somehow
There shines about me all the while
The radiance of that loved one's smile.
I can not see her but I feel
Her queenly presence as I kneel
And thank the gracious Lord divine
For that dear helpmate that was mine;
And so with His aid I will be
The man that she would make of me
If she were here.



THE ROAD TO EVERYWHERE

Oh little brown road that winds away
And is lost to sight in the twilight gray,
Just where would you guide my steps and why,
If I your dusty trail should try?
If I should impose my trust in you
Would you take me to haunts that my childhood knew
Or would you guide me safe and well
To that distant land where the loved ones dwell?
Pray, tell me more of your route and fare,
Oh little brown road to everywhere.

Oh little brown road would you guide my feet
To the land where the sky and the mountains meet,
Or would you bring me safe and fast
To the fields of grain and the prairies vast;
Perhaps your path leads to the shore
Where your trail is lost in the billow's roar,
But whether it's ocean or mountain or plain,
I beg you to take me home again,
For all of the wealth of the world is there,
Oh little brown road to everywhere.

THE PICTURES ON THE WALL

I've a sacred little sanctum
In a room that's all unkept;
There is dust upon the mantle
And the floor is quite unswept,
But I lock myself at evening
In its solitude and hide
Where the walls are hung with pictures
That to me are sanctified.

There I lose the cares that cluster
'Round the problems of the day,
As I tilt my chair to visit
With the friends so far away;
And they seem to smile and beckon
As I greet them once again
For a reminiscent hour
In the silence of my den.

Saddles hang in yonder corner,
Boots are standing by the door,
Over there a cap and jacket
That I don't use any more;
Cups and trophies on the table,
Whips and ribbons, bits and shoes,
And a funny old-time muzzle
That the trainer now taboos.



PETER MANNING 1:57 $\frac{3}{4}$

There's a host of old-time faces
 Beaming over famous steeds,
While the ever ready Year Book
 Tells the story of their deeds;
But tonight a dozen new ones
 Greet me when my work is done,
'Tis the Calendar of Champions
 For Nineteen Twenty-one.

Peter Manning, King of Trotters,
 Monarch of the tribe alone,
I can almost hear the footsteps
 That have borne you to the throne;
But I turn the pages over
 And I wonder if you'll reign
When another year is ended
 And my pictures come again.

How do ordinary mortals
 Look to you from up above,
Fleet, determined, flying trotter,
 Product of the state I love.
Fame is all too transitory
 As is glory and renown,
Be ye watchful else your master
 Guides another to the crown.

Then a striking picture greets me
 As I turn the pages o'er
Of another Murphy trotter
 That is knocking at the door;



SINGLE G 1:59

He stands at marked attention
And the thing at which he stares
Away off in the distance
Is the crown that Manning wears.

There is not a man among us
If we'd all admit the truth,
But would turn the clock's hands backward
To the joyous days of youth;
Silently we pass the milestones
And although we squirm and writhe
We can't escape the notice
Of the "Old Man with the Scythe."

Thus I marvel, gentle reader,
As I turn another page
To Ed Allen and his pacer
Bettered like the wine by age.
Ponce de Leon's famous fountain
With its praises widely sung
Cannot equal Indiana
When it comes to keeping young.

I would camp in Cambridge City
If the Scythe Man would agree
To pass me by unnoticed
Just as he has Single G.
Yes, I'd take my den and pictures
To that charming Hoosier spot
If old age would overlook me
Like the Horse that time forgot.

Then I spend a happy hour
With McDonald, Cox and Ray,
Say Hello to Sandy Taylor,
Hear what Richard has to say ;
Have a chat with old friend Erwin,
Look at Chase Dean's flying steed,
And I find another evening
Has passed pleasantly indeed.

All the family have retired,
On the hearth the embers glow,
As I sit alone and visit
With the "Boys" I used to know ;
And I find unbounded comfort
When the dusk of evening falls,
Just to watch the friends and horses
In the pictures on the walls.





WHERE THEY STEP TO BEAT THE BAND

HOW THE DOCTOR LOST AND WON

Have you ever heard the story
Of the man who lost but won?
Well, listen, fellow horsemen,
And I'll tell you how 'twas done.

Back there in the prairie country
Where the corn grows thick and tall,
And where nearly every village
Has a county fair each Fall,
There's a nifty little race track
Where they step to beat the band,
And a judge who knows his business
Issues orders from the stand.

Every year the horsey fellows
From the city by the lake,
Enter for a short vacation
And their business cares forsake;
One, a care-free, jolly dentist
Always makes the little town,
Golden Boy he calls his pacer,
And his name is Doctor Brown.

Now among the other drivers
Was a chap that we'll call Black,
Though the name was very different
That they called him on the track;
And he also had a pacer,
Quite a fast one, rumor ran,
And below the Doctor's entry
Was Black's filly, Mary Ann.

Wednesday brought a crowd tremendous,
Hosts of every creed and kind,
Who intently viewed the pumpkins
With the races most in mind.
Seven pacers faced the starter
In the slow class of the day,
All were on their good behavior
And were quickly on their way.

It was everybody's contest
Till they reached the distance stand
Then Black tapped the flying filly
And she quickly took command;

Doctor Brown was riding easy,
Didn't seem to care a whit,
Golden Boy had finished second
And was plainly "on the bit."

Second heat and every starter
Finished in the self-same place,
Some declared it good as over,
Mary Ann would win the race.
Then a dark horse called The Joker
Beat them in a furious drive,
Doctor Brown still "buggy riding"
While Black's mare was number five.

Fourth heat, and the Doctor's entry
Quickly grabbed the inner rail,
Black, content to take it easy,
Coaxed his little mare to trail;
Then the fifth and at its finish
Golden Boy had won two heats,
And the crowd now all excited
Stretched and settled in their seats.

Brown and Black who knew the rule-book
Thought no purse could compensate
For the mark they'd get by winning
So they planned "on being late."
They alone came out to finish
And it readily was seen
That each driver had decided
That he'd keep his pacer "green."

Just three times they scored demurely
In a mild, half-hearted way ;
When the judge addressed the drivers,
This is what he had to say :
Mr. Black, you are a fellow
That I thought was on the square,
I'm not pleased, I can assure you,
With the way you drive your mare ;
Now you take the Doctor's gelding
And I warn you, Mr. Black,
It will be your last appearance
If you ever once look back.

Doctor Brown, the judge continued,
You for years have graced this course,
And no one could quite convince me
That you'd really pull a horse ;
Yet you seem to fear the record
And I've hit upon a plan
That perhaps will save your bacon,
You will drive Black's Mary Ann ;
Now you land her here a winner
Or your patrons by the lake
Will find you in your office
When their teeth begin to ache.

"Do you think he really means it,"
And Brown's face was ashy white
As he whispered to the Doctor
Who was turning on the right,
And the Doctor answered, "Does he ?
Say, I've seen that judge before,

I'm not taking any chances,
He'll do all he said and more."

Neck and neck they reached the quarter,
Whips were popping thick and fast,
On into the stretch they struggled,
Just a question which could last,
Past the half they still were pacing
Like two demons hitched to pole,
While the drivers' frantic efforts
Proved each hoped to win the goal.
Side by side the pacers staggered,
Horse by horse and man by man,
But the Doctor won by inches
With the filly Mary Ann.

So the chaps that paid their money
For admission at the gate,
All agreed it was a corker,
That the race was simply great;
Black's bay mare had won the battle,
Golden Boy had done his best,
And a sort of satisfaction
Hovered 'neath each driver's vest.

No reward is so enduring
As the sense of duty done,
It eclipses all the records
And the money that you've won;
Doctor Brown still races horses
But he wins when e'er he can,
For he don't forget the lesson
That he learned with Mary Ann.

Down the street the judge still muses
In his spacious dry-goods store,
Where he issues daily orders
To a dozen clerks or more ;
And he still soliloquizes
That the rules are not too dense
To be strictly comprehended
If they're mixed with common sense.

There's a moral to the story,
If you'd keep the horse game square,
Drive your trotter or your pacer
As the Doctor drove Black's mare.



THE COUNTRY STORE

Plainly mirrored in my memory
Are the scenes my boyhood knew,
And I brush away the teardrops
Just to get a better view
Of the churchyard and the schoolhouse
Which I picture o'er and o'er,
But I cherish most the glimpses
Of that old-time country store.

There it was we used to gather
When the chores were done at night,
Every topic from the weather
To the war was settled right,

And the leaders of the nation
For a hundred years or more
Could have gained some information
At that old-time country store.

On the left side were the groceries
And soap and tinware bright,
While the calicoes and gingham
Were piled up on the right ;
In the back the syrup barrels
And the apple cider kegs
Were flanked with jars of butter
And baskets filled with eggs.

Uncle Sam had graced the structure
With his presence, so to speak,
And we used to mail a letter
Or receive one every week ;
But the evenings when the fellers
Was silent like and dumb,
Was when the mail man whispered,
"Boys, the trottin' paper's come."

Oh the thrills that went a-kiting
Up my spine and down my back
As I listened to the tidings
Of the doings on the track,
Just how Nancy Hanks had triumphed,
How the "Pointer Hoss" had won,
Held us all in wrapt attention
When the trottin' papers come.

How Axtel had broke the record
And how Allerton had raced,
Of the miles that John R. Gentry,
Robert J. and Patchen Paced,
National issues were forgotten
When young Online paced in four
And we read the trottin' papers
In the old-time country store.

Little wonder that I'm yearning
Though I roam in distant lands,
For I find my fancies turning
Back to where the old store stands ;
Once again I tie my chestnut
To the gnawed and whittled rail,
Once again I ask the postman,
Please to bring me out my mail.

Once again I greet my schoolmates,
Once again I grope my way
Up the creaking wooden stairway
Where the old band used to play ;
All is quiet like and silent
And I lift the laggard latch
Just to catch a strain of music
That no modern band can match.

Ah, the old days all have vanished,
I would be a stranger there,
I would find an automobile
Standing where I tied my mare,

And I'd find the old store vacant
And the band dispersed and gone,
Leaving like the birds of Summer,
Just a memory of their song.

Now I read about the racers
In a most obtrusive way,
How the pacers beat two minutes
Almost any Autumn day,
But I'd give my earthly holdings
Just to live those years once more
When we read the trottin' papers
In that quaint old country store.



BUDD DOBLE

REWARD

When a trotter is nearing the end of a race
And struggles along in the lead,
When his driver endeavors to quicken his pace
To win from some threatening steed,
I am sure there is nothing that prompts him to try
One last final effort to land
And capture the heat from the one rushing by
Like the frenzied applause from the stand.

When an actor has cleverly mastered his lines
Though the play may be weary and long,
The curtain is lifted a number of times
To appease the demands of the throng;
I am certain that when he at last ventures out
To make a short speech and appears
The greatest reward that is his, beyond doubt,
Is the ringing applause in his ears.

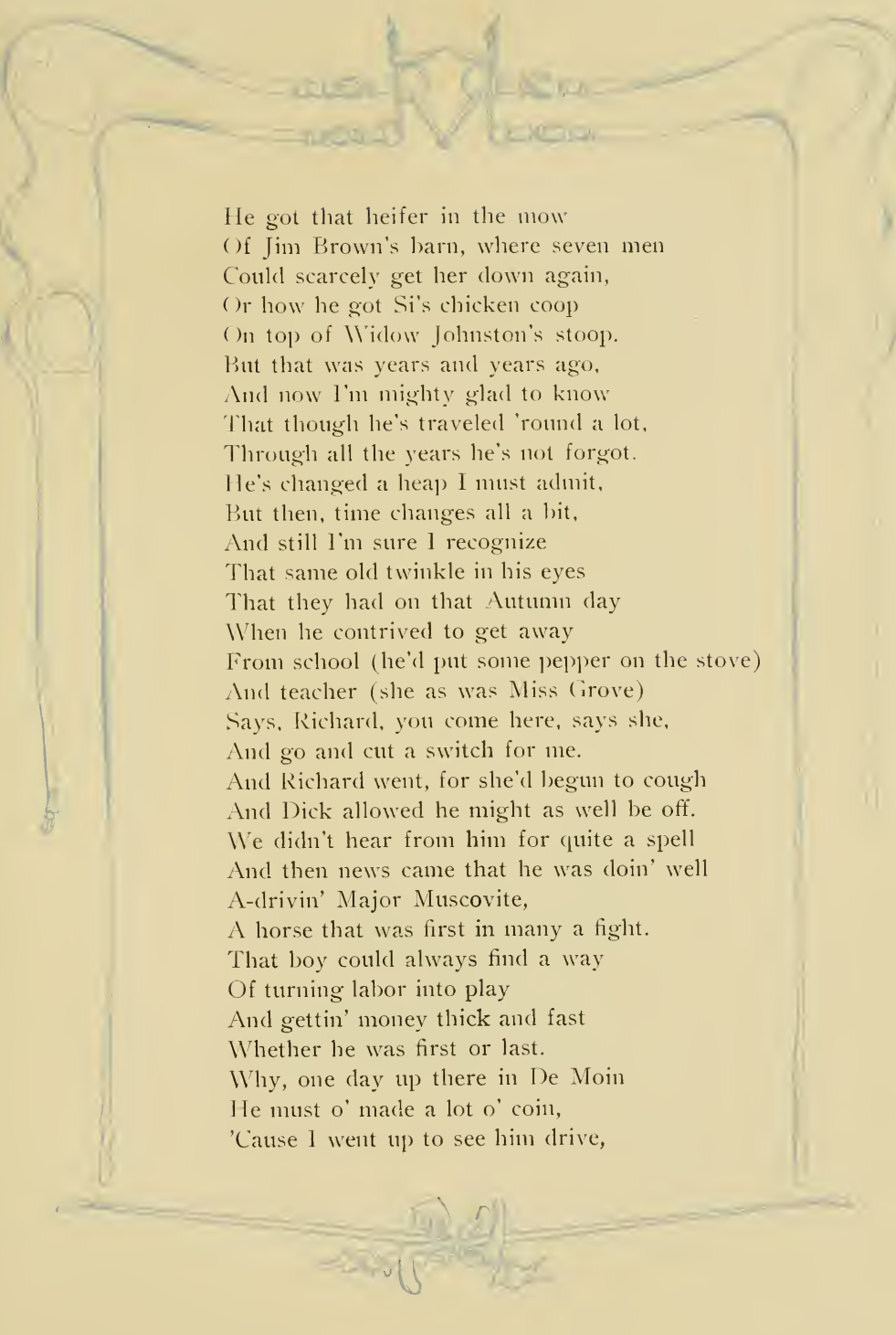
When a fellow has journeyed o'er life's rugged
track
Full eighty long laps to success,
There are few who can say as they proudly look
back
That they've played the game fair, I'll confess.
For life's greatest winning is not in the gold
Or the pleasures that riches ensnare,
But the sweetest reward, when the story is told,
Comes from knowing we played on the square.

I have just such a friend that I point to with pride,
Who has toiled bravely on toward the goal,
He never has carried another man wide
Or crowded the chap at the pole;
So here's my reward in a toast to his health,
Till the stars in the heavens grow dim,
The world needs not money to count as its wealth
But a million more fellows like him.



McMAHON'S BOY

Said "Zeekel" Smith to Ezra Moore
As they whittled away at the village store,
"I see that McMahon boy is back
That made a name upon the track
A-drivin' hosses fast and slow;
They say he's made a lot of dough;
I told the neighbors down my way
That lad would make his mark some day,
And now that he has made plum good
I'm glad, because I knowed he would.
It hardly seems a dozen year
Since he was messin' 'round us here,
Playin' horse and catchin' frogs
And tyin' cans to all the dogs;
I never yet could see just how



He got that heifer in the mow
Of Jim Brown's barn, where seven men
Could scarcely get her down again,
Or how he got Si's chicken coop
On top of Widow Johnston's stoop.
But that was years and years ago,
And now I'm mighty glad to know
That though he's traveled 'round a lot,
Through all the years he's not forgot.
He's changed a heap I must admit,
But then, time changes all a bit,
And still I'm sure I recognize
That same old twinkle in his eyes
That they had on that Autumn day
When he contrived to get away
From school (he'd put some pepper on the stove)
And teacher (she as was Miss Grove)
Says, Richard, you come here, says she,
And go and cut a switch for me.
And Richard went, for she'd begun to cough
And Dick allowed he might as well be off.
We didn't hear from him for quite a spell
And then news came that he was doin' well
A-drivin' Major Muscovite,
A horse that was first in many a fight.
That boy could always find a way
Of turning labor into play
And gettin' money thick and fast
Whether he was first or last.
Why, one day up there in De Moin
He must o' made a lot o' coin,
'Cause I went up to see him drive,

And goodness, gracious sakes alive,
How he performed, and how he tore
Away when they would turn to score.
The man who stood in the little shed
Would ring the bell and shake his head,
And then he'd draw a small red flag
And wave in the face of Richard's nag,
And shout as they jogged back up to score,
If you do it again you get fifty more.
My, he must a made a lot of dough,
'Cause they never once beat him there I know,
And the sun was gettin' mighty low
Before that feller shouted Go.
But when at last they got the word,
McMahon's boy flew like a bird
Around the turn, in front a dozen rods,
Too far to overcome the odds.
At that he barely won the heat,
And as he climbed down from his seat
He paused a moment to remark,
'I like this racin' after dark,
It's strange how nuts from little acorns grow,
That starter never could say Go.
He'll do quite well to tend to things up there,
I'm being paid to win with this old mare.'
And later on I heard him say
That he had found the only way
That he could ever win a race
From a bunch of steeds that he couldn't outpace
Was to commence a little while before
The rest of the horses left the score.
And I knew he hit upon that plan

Long years before he became a man,
So that was the reason I never could catch
The boy who raided my melon patch.
If Richard had stayed around out here
He might have been an auctioneer,
Or maybe mayor of the town,
Or like as not we'd sent him down
To Washington to make our laws
That we don't favor much because
They're far too dry, and then I'll bet
We could have kept this old state wet,
And if it was, and we could have our brew
We'd make him President, that's what we'd do.
For a man who can drive a trotter straight
I would trust at the helm of the ship of state.
I'm glad McMahon's boy made good
Because I always said he would.





TWILIGHT

My window faces toward the East
And as I wait
The twilight steals unheeded o'er the bay,
While twinkling warnings from the Golden Gate
Beam out to warn the vessels on their way:
Beneath that window calla lillies bloom,
The California hills are fresh and green,
The scent of roses fills my room
And all about is tranquil and serene;
The darkness deepens and the daylight ends,
The scene below enthralls me not the least,
I dream tonight of old-time friends,
My window faces toward the East.



THE OLD HOMESTEAD

You would hardly recognize it,
It seems so bleak and bare,
For the fine old trees are absent
That once guarded it with care,
And the peonies and snowballs
That blossomed every May
Have disappeared completely
Since the Old Folks went away.

The climbing rose is missing
With its mass of scarlet bloom,
Gone the purple lilac bushes
With their wealth of sweet perfume,

And the shady apple orchard
Where the toothsome dainties grew
That lured me on my way from school
Alas has passed from view.

The little elevation
That we chose to call a hill
Has vanished with the flowers
And the murmuring brook is still
That wandered through the meadows
Where the clover dark and deep
Watched lovingly above it
Till it sang itself to sleep.

The old red crib is standing
Where the golden seed corn hung,
Near the woodshed where we gathered
When the dinner bell had rung,
And a score of handsome horses
That could win a prize, I know,
Had been safely fed and cared for
In the stable broad and low.

Once another red-haired youngster
Daily tramped the dusty trail,
And shared the home-made goodies
From each shining dinner pail,
Now no boyhood pal awaits me
For the auburn locks are gray
And the homestead's bleak and lonely
Since the Old Folks went away.

Just across the fields they're sleeping
Where a stately pine tree stands
And points its silent finger
To "a house not made with hands."
Somehow heaven will be perfect
When we view it up above,
If we find those precious Old Folks
And the homestead that we love.





THE OLD WHITE FIRE TEAM

Standing there upon the pavement
In a sleepy sort o' way
Is a snow-white pair of horses
That were once called dapple gray,
And I pause in admiration
And in reverence, as I seem
To sense the faithful service
Of that old white fire team.

Just a score of years have vanished
Since Old Fox first heard the bell,
And Rags, a trifle younger,
Served the city just as well;

So my truant memory ranges
To the things that time has wrought,
As I ponder o'er the changes
Since the old white team was bought.

Once their step was light and airy
Like a winsome, joyous bride,
But the buoyancy departed
With the dapples from their side;
Eyes are not so bright, I fancy,
But I catch the old-time gleam
When Haley drops the harness
On the old white fire team.

Possibly they're not so speedy,
Time in his relentless roll
Has demanded quite a tribute
And collected quite a toll;
But somehow I've a notion
That Haley's silvered hair
Is due to his devotion
And his love for that old pair.

They have shared the joys and sorrows
Of the city day by day,
Joining with the silent mourners
When our friends were laid away,
But when gayer throngs were gathered
They would champ their bits and prance
To the strains of martial music
When the boys came home from France.

When the old team came to serve us
Motor trucks were still unknown,
But they answered every purpose
Quite unaided and alone;
What though muddy streets o'erwhelmed us,
What though blizzards filled the air,
We could rest securely knowing
That the old white team was there.

Then the "onward march of progress"
Struck the city with a zest,
And a motor truck was purchased
That the agent called the best;
I remember quite distinctly
How he in his long discourse
Depicted mental anguish
At the passing of the horse.

Thus their fate seemed sealed completely,
But the wiser heads prevailed,
And we kept them through the Winter,
Lest the shiny motor failed;
Then there came that bitter evening
When the cruel flames appalled
And they saved our homes and dear ones
While the handsome truck was stalled.

Now I wake in abject horror
When the bell rings after dark,
Lest the carburetor's busted
Or the spark plugs fail to spark;

And although I hear the clatter
And the noise and siren's scream,
I listen for the patter
Of the old white fire team.

Years will come and in their coming
They will bring more modern ways
To fight the fire demon
Than Haley and the grays,
Yet to them is due the glory
And as long as fires gleam,
We will tell the old, old story
Of Haley and his team.





A REAL OPTIMIST

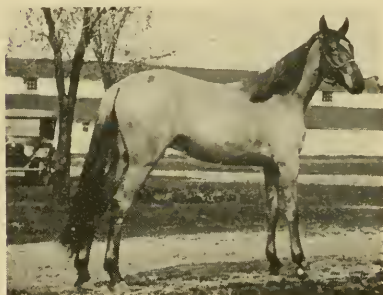
"Dad, what is a horseman," a youngster inquired
Of a horse-loving father he greatly admired.
"I read about chauffeurs and cars all the while
But it seems to me horsemen are quite out of style,
And teacher remarked that I should not repeat,
But that she believed horsemen were quite obsolete,
Now just what she meant I can't well make out,
So I thought I would ask you what it was about."

The Year Book Dad studied was closed with a slap
As he cuddled the questioner up in his lap;
"My boy, you may tell her I find as a rule
That the most of life's lessons are not learned in
school.

The love of a trotter you don't get from books
And you can't pick a pacer because of his looks.
A fellow can't chum with a horse every day
Without being bigger and better some way;
The friends and the horses most trusted and tried
Are the ones that will stand without being tied.
You can tell her for me that a horseman's a chap
Who knows all the principal towns on the map;
He can give you the dates when the races all start,
He knows when the trains all arrive and depart:
He can give you the name and the breeding offhand
Of every sensational steed in the land.
A horseman's a fellow who laughs at defeat
And smilingly comes to the scratch every heat,
And whether it's Winter or Summer or Fall,
He's true to his partner that stands in the stall.
Though the rain spoils the races he knows in the end
It will nourish the grass for his four-footed friend.
A horseman's a chap who will give his last sou
To a friend in distress if he knows he's true blue;
He reads in the coals of the old office stove
The future success of that colt that he drove,
And each fleecy cloud in the blue of the sky
Means a winning for him in the sweet bye-and-bye.
A horseman's a man, as I told you before,
Who don't get his knowledge from any book store;
He invoices all of the pleasure he gets

And closes each season without the regrets;
If his trotter don't win quite as much as he should
He knows that NEXT YEAR he is bound to make
good.

Just say to your teacher, your daddy insists,
That a horseman's the greatest of all optimists."





THE BLACKSMITH SHOP

There's a sleepy little village
Nestling in a vast domain,
Guarded by the serried corn fields
And by shocks of golden grain,
Just a half a dozen houses
And a church and school and store,
And a dingy little blacksmith shop
With pictures on the door.

There's no slippery, treacherous pavement,
There's no sidewalk and no curb,
There's no smoky, rumbling railroad
And no street cars to disturb,
Yet I'd guide my wandering footsteps
To this quiet scene and stop
With head bowed low in reverence
For that little blacksmith shop.

'Twas a sort of civic center
In the days of long ago;
With its welcome roof a refuge
From the sun or from the snow,
And the smithy's cheery greetings
Always tempted us to stray
To the dusky little blacksmith shop
That stood across the way.
With its windows barred and broken
And its moss-grown shingles curled,
It was still in boyhood fancies
Quite the best in all the world;
For its weather-beaten battens
Would flame anew each Spring
With the gorgeous new creations
That the poster man would bring.
Envied was the lucky culprit
Teacher stood upon the floor,
For he could watch proceedings
Through the open schoolhouse door;
He could see the poster fellow
Clean the little blacksmith shop
And paste another picture
From the bottom to the top.
Some kids loved the circus posters
With the lions in their rage
And a lady calmly sitting
In the tawny tiger's cage;
But the picture most entrancing
That glued me to the spot
Was the rearing, plunging horses
Entered at the county trot.

Four—a bay, a gray, a chestnut
And a black one on a break,
While his driver's frantic efforts
Caused my boyish heart to ache,
Thus I stood there in the gloaming
Of that happy Summer day
When the trotting bills were posted
On the shop across the way.

I have seen the Rosa Bonheurs
And the Keiths and Rembrandts, too,
Of many famous pictures
I have since then had a view;
But there's nothing halts my footsteps
And causes me to stop,
Like a flaming trotting poster
Pasted on a blacksmith shop.

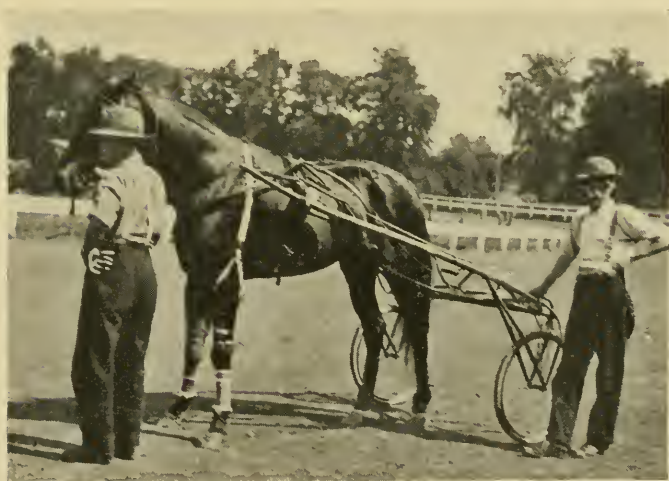




THE SPORT WORTH WHILE

There's a mighty satisfaction
When the fish are biting good,
And you quickly get your limit
As a lucky angler should;
To the chap who is a hunter
It must be a joy indeed
To bag a brace of mallards
Every time you draw a bead;
There must be a lot of pleasure
In the games of golf or chess
If your winning and your partner
Is plainly in distress;
But oh, the joy worth knowing
That nothing equals quite,
Is to feel the thrill of rapture
When your trotter's going right.

When the morning light is breaking
To the robin's sweet refrain,
And you grab your cakes and coffee
Like you had to catch a train,
When your wife in blank amazement
Wonders why you're up so soon,
And explains to yawning kiddies,
"Daddy won't be home till noon."
When you don your old white Stetson
And kiss them at the door,
As you pause to fill the wood-box
That you've passed so oft before,
Then it is that life's worth living
And the old world's mighty bright,
'Cause his name's among the entries
And your trotter's working right.



"BOOTS ALL ON HIM"

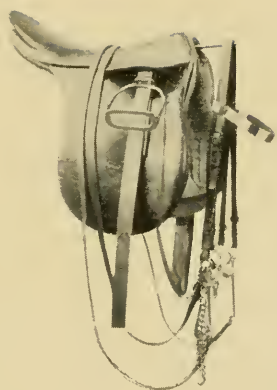
When you reach the dusty oval
And you say to Windy Al,
"Just put the boots all on him
And I'll step him up, old Pal."
When you take the sulky gently
From its peg up on the wall,
And blow up the pesky tires
That were none too good last Fall,
When you jog him till he's ready
And turn him at the score,
And he seems to pull you faster
Than he ever has before,
Then it is you count your money,
For he's charmed you by his flight,
And you can't be pessimistic
When your trotter's working right.



And so to all you sportsmen
Misguided but sincere,
I've a bit of information
I would whisper in your ear.
If you enjoy your fishing
Or any sport you've found,
If you like to go a-hunting
Or chase the pill around,
Just keep it up but take a ride
Behind a horse at speed,
I will not advise you further,
There won't be any need,
You'll sell the whole equipment
Before tomorrow night,
If you'll sit behind a trotter
Or a pacer when he's right.

FINIS

The tan-bark ring is hushed and still
And fitful shadows play
Where crafty riders rode at will
The steeds of yesterday;
And yet how like the ring is life,
We primp and strut and bravely try
For one brief moment in the strife
To shine triumphant in the Judge's eye;
Some day the silvery bugle's tone
Will call us to the Great Unknown,
And when Old Gabriel blows his blast
And Peter swings the gate at last
We'll find performance counts far more
Than conformation in the score
That's kept up there, and so my friend
Let us so live that in the end
When all life's show is through
We'll get a BLUE.



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